

AN ALPINE CLIMB.
WITH A REFERENCE TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

FROM A STAFF CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.
Weesen, Aug. 18, 1891.
At Lucerne Catholics and Protestants worship in the same temple—the Maria-Hilf Church. The Presbyterians hold their services early Sunday morning and later the Romanists hold theirs. In this little valley of Weesen most of the inhabitants are Catholics, but their churches are freely placed at the disposal of their Protestant brethren; and when Protestants marry, a Protestant clergyman performs the ceremony in one of the Catholic churches with none to molest or make him afraid. So it is at Glarus and at other points in Switzerland and in the Tyrol—notably at Innsbruck. Now when I left New-York, last May, the Rev. Dr. Bridgman had just left the Baptist for the Episcopal communion, and the circumstance was occasioning much lively comment and some drastic criticism. But suppose the Archbishop had given and Dr. Bridgman had accepted an invitation to preach in the Fifth Avenue Cathedral? Methinks in that event the religious community of the metropolis would have received no violent a shock that the Statue of Liberty would have toppled over and the Brooklyn Bridge would have been rent in twain. There is an acreable story of a girl who came to her father asking his consent to wed one of the late Mr. Barnum's contortionists. That parent of hers was rather an illiterate person and so was unable to conjecture who or what a contortionist might be, but concluded that he must be a dissenter. However, being liberal-minded—was far better than being sophisticated—the old man said to his daughter, after a few fond preliminary remarks, "Is an O'Flarraty have always been Catholics; but it is an affair of religious toleration and if the man of your choice is a contortionist, you may not only marry him but go with him to his church if he suits me in other respects." We Americans are accustomed to flatter ourselves, I think, that there is more religious toleration on our side of the water than on this. And all things considered doubtless there is; but the Presbyterian who finds himself worshipping in a Catholic church at Lucerne may be pardoned if he holds that Switzerland can teach us something in religious toleration.

Of course everybody who goes to Lucerne goes up the Rigi. The Rigi is the favorite peak of the adventurous Alpine climber who is too lazy or too stout to depend solely upon his individual legs in doing his Swiss climbing. He prefers to climb seated on a soft cushion of a car of the funicular railroad which runs from the base of the Rigi to its summit, and while being thus propelled he gaily sings to himself:
"Why not be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease?"
I am now to be understood as asserting that all who go up the Rigi are pulled up. By no means. A plucky man from our great Northwest, who must have weighed, say 225 pounds, faithfully footed it up and down that mountain the other day. His sole companion on the trip was an imposing alpenstock topped with as pretty a chaamois horn as you ever saw. Having accomplished the feat, he declared as he sat complacently on the piazza of the Schweizerhof at Lucerne that he had reduced his weight eleven and a half pounds.

"Did you write in the visitors' book of your hotel on top of the Rigi?" inquired one of his friends who heard him tell of the reduction.
"No," answered the self-reliant climber, "why do you ask?"
"Well, it occurred to me," explained the other, "that you ought to have transcribed in the visitors' book the words of the psalmist—I think it was the psalmist—'My paths drop steepness.'"

I did the Rigi myself by steam but partially atoned for such pallidness by climbing the Speer, an Alpine peak higher than the Rigi, without any extraneous assistance. Included in our party of seven which made the ascent was a guide, a Farmington girl, a Wellesley College girl and two small boys, one of them a son of Mount Halstead. These boys made it exceedingly lively for the rest of us, for there was no such word as fatigue in their vocabulary and they kept bounding about up the steep and rough incline like a span of lusty ibexes and endeavoring to incite the rest of us to catch them. We reared round to turn back, or at least to sit down and rest often and a long while at a time. But the boys were in such capital condition and were so eager to get on that rather than lose caste in their eyes all the rest of us braced up and forged forward. Besides, there was the stimulating influence of the guide. He was tolerant of the weak human nature committed to his care, but still he was firm. He had stipulated for a consideration to conduct the party to the top of the Speer, and as a conscientious man, careful of his professional reputation, he kept us to our work. We really did not need a guide much more than a duck needs a swimming-master. But then the guide needed us, for as I understood it, he was the sole support of a large family. So we climbed and climbed and climbed, that hot July day, from 4:30 p. m. until 9:30 p. m. Then we rested for the night in a scant apology for a tavern where the wicked flea held a laydown and vociferous carnival and murdered sleep as successfully as Macbeth. As I was falling into a doze there came to me through the thin partition which divided my room from the next the clear, low voice of the Farmington girl:

Beware the awful avalanche—
Beware the fir tree's withered branch,
A tear stood in McGuffy's eye,
But still he answered with a sigh,
Excelsior.

At 3:30 the next morning we resumed our climb, and an hour later stood on the railed excursion of the top of the Speer. The moon was at the zenith in a cloudless sky attended by her ever-faithful star. There was a shining ring about her like the halo with which the painters encircle the head of the Virgin and of the saints. She looked exceedingly noble and lovely. Far in the foreground Platanus, a rugged pile, and the Rigi, looking smooth and regular as a sugar loaf, stood out clear in the wonderful searching light, a light to which both the sun and the moon contributed—gold suffused with silver. How bright grew the west while the sunrise was as yet but a prophecy. It was Arthur Hugh Clough who sang:

And not by eastern windows only
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs low, how slowly,
But westward look—their task is bright!

At the north were snow peaks set against a sky where palest green and blue, in bold defiance of the high priests of taste who hold that those colors never go well together, beautifully harmonized. How exquisite the effect of the advancing sunbeams upon the gray battlements of the towering mountains—like a smile slowly spreading over the features of the Sphinx; and how close an approach to the appearance of a high sea at twilight were the billowy ranges at the south partly obscured by the clouds which had settled upon them. When the huge dazzling ball of fire had fairly risen above the horizon, and sunbeams and lower ranges and intervals and valleys were suffused with the glory—and I must desert or else subject myself to the suspicion of venturing to add to the supply—which is already equal to the demand—of descriptions of "a sunrise in the Alps." I will merely add that on my way down from Speer I was asked if I wouldn't like to join a party which proposed to make the ascent of the Glarnsch a few days later. As an inducement I was assured that the Glarnsch was a good many feet taller than the Speer

POPULAR OBSERVATIONS.
PARK PLACE LESSONS.
THE ENGLISH LAW FOR THE CARE OF BUILDINGS.

To the Editor of The Tribune.
Sir: From a careful examination of the premises in Park Place where the disaster occurred recently I am of the opinion that the prime cause of the falling of the building was an explosion, and that the explosion was caused by the ignition either of compressed gas or of naphtha or of the ignition of a highly attenuated gas—naphtha or gas which found its way into the building through the sewer pipes. It is known that there existed, on the ground floor of the building, a quantity of naphtha, which was employed in the lithographic establishments which occupied the upper floors and possibly by the chemical firm which occupied the ground floor.

In the extremely warm weather which we have recently had the naphtha was exposed to such a temperature as would cause it rapidly to evolve a gas, which gas when brought into contact with any flame would explode.

In regard to illuminating gas finding its way into the building, this may be charged to the heat caused by the mains of the New-York Steam Company, which has its principal generating station in Greenwich. The heat from the steam mains was sufficient to expand any gas which might be free in the ether or present in the sewers, and to create such a pressure or need in the plumbing system as to use in this city. It is possible that gas might have found its way into the building through the sewer pipes on the lower floor or in the rear of the building, which point was probably toward the front of the building. As the floors inclined toward this point from the back and front of the building, each floor formed a wedge with its apex downward, and probably all the heavy material on these floors which was not fastened and bolted to them slid toward the point of the wedge made by the sewer pipes, and coming to rest with a sudden jolt, and thereby acting on the short leg of the wedge drove the front of the building into the street and so brought down the whole building.

It does not appear that the building was overloaded, but I do not believe that it fell by reason of this overweight, except as a consequence of the explosion. Any one who is at all familiar with printing and printing presses knows that it is quite necessary that a press shall be given a firm foundation, no matter what the strength and stiffness of the frame, for the pressure which is applied to the type is so great that unless such a foundation be provided the press will not register. There is no reason to believe that the building was overloaded, but it has been reported that the building was overloaded, and it is possible to have conducted a printing or lithographing business within it. The fact that there have been found within the ruins barrels of naphtha, etc., does not in any wise alter my opinion, because the mere explosion of one barrel would not necessarily destroy the building. There is no way of accounting for the fall of the building except by the theory of an explosion, as the building did not contain boilers and furnaces, and derived the power used therein from an external source. Personally I am inclined to believe that the explosion was due to the gas which leaked in from the sewers, and the resulting explosion is one that I have long expected. Such explosions have occurred in hundreds of the subway in different parts of the city and will undoubtedly occur again, particularly in all that part of the city which is traversed by the pipes of the New-York Steam Company.

As to the responsibility of the disaster, it rests in my opinion with that Bureau of the Fire Department which has control of the subject of the prevention of fires, as is specifically set forth in sections 402-405, inclusive of the Consolidation Act. It is the duty of the Fire Department to see that the city is protected against fire, and for that purpose to govern the storage and use of inflammable materials. It is the duty of the Fire Department to see that the city is protected against fire, and for that purpose to govern the storage and use of inflammable materials. It is the duty of the Fire Department to see that the city is protected against fire, and for that purpose to govern the storage and use of inflammable materials.

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WHAT A PASTOR SEES AND HEARS
ITEMS OF INTEREST TO CHURCH PEOPLE.

After Dr. Deems, of the Church of the Strangers, had spoken at Minneapolis recently, one of the local pastors said that if the speaker continued to grow young during the next ten years, the Lord would have to open a kindergarten in Heaven in order to find a proper place for the then youthful octogenarian.

The Rev. Dr. Millard, of the Washington Square Methodist Episcopal Church, is one of the many pastors who will begin their year's work to-morrow. Dr. Millard has been spending the summer with his family at Saxton's River, Vermont, about twenty miles north of Brattleboro. In a letter to a friend he gives vent to his enthusiasm in these terms: "We were having a grand time here! What a glorious country this Vermont hills! What solace in the rustic quiet of these hills! The something like refined dignity of these Vermont villages! And the people, what a charm there is about this clear American strain coming down from the old Colonial days! You see what a few weeks among the Green Mountains can do toward making a Vermont enthusiast out of me."

For two or three years Mr. Moody has been making strong efforts to secure for his summer conferences the services of the Rev. John McNeill, the brilliant London preacher, who he thinks is without a rival in that city, with the possible exception of Spurgeon. Mr. McNeill came to America two or three weeks ago, and has been visiting his brothers in Chicago, where he preached last week. Mr. Moody has invited the visitor to spend a few days at Northfield, and he will preach there on September 20, and it is expected that many who have been charmed by his sermons when abroad, or who have heard them in the street, will find it convenient to spend a few days at Northfield also.

Dr. Worcester, professor elect in Union Seminary, is quoted as having written in a letter recently received in Chicago, in reply to one asking him to deliver a course of lectures on the subject of the "Moral Reform," "I have no objection to my name being used in connection with the subject, but I do not expect to follow blindly in the footsteps of a man in a systematized form. No doubt I shall learn much from such a scholar as Dr. Briggs, as I shall from Dr. Shedd, Dr. H. B. Smith, Dr. Hodges, and other eminent teachers in our own and other churches. But I must mark out my own path by my own study, and do not expect to follow blindly in the footsteps of a man in a systematized form. No doubt I shall learn much from such a scholar as Dr. Briggs, as I shall from Dr. Shedd, Dr. H. B. Smith, Dr. Hodges, and other eminent teachers in our own and other churches. 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